

MINUTES
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

October 9, 2014

McGuire's Resort
7880 Mackinaw Trail, Cadillac, MI 49601

Present for the Natural Resources Commission

J.R. Richardson, chairman
John Matonich, vice chairman
Rex Schlaybaugh
Louise Klarr
Tim Nichols

Absent

Vicki Pontz

Present for DNR Staff

Keith Creagh, DNR director
William E. Moritz, DNR natural resources deputy
Dennis Knapp, DNR chief of staff
Pam Stevenson, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General
Cheryl Nelson, executive assistant to the NRC
Other department staff

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chairman **J.R. Richardson** called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 2:32 p.m. Director Creagh recognized State Representatives **Jon Bumstead**, **Bruce Rendon**, and **Phil Potvin** in the audience.

Fisheries Division Strategic Plan Update Fisheries division chief **Jim Dexter** reviewed the progress on the division's strategic plan. **Dexter** shared with the commission that because of the uncertainty regarding authority for sport fishing regulations, noted by the two initiatives on the November ballot, Fisheries will delay some regulations until next year and the 2015 fishing guide will be for one year, but will go to a two-year guide in 2016.

The final issue that **Dexter** updated the commission on is the steps being taken after the single positive eDNA result taken from the Kalamazoo River in Allegan County. The department is

working with federal partners to do further sampling on the river. The findings of the single sample show just the presence of genetic material. Once additional sampling results are returned it will guide future assessment and management actions.

Hunting Seasons Updates Wildlife division chief **Russ Mason** provided an update on the various hunting seasons and encouraged people to get out to hunt and trap. He also noted that the department is creating assistance for disabled hunters, including mowed trails, and special mobility devices.

Carl T. Johnson Hunting and Fishing Center Update **Josh Pellow** provided a short presentation on Mitchell State Park. He also shared information regarding the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail, which runs from Comstock Park to Cadillac. **Ed Shaw**, park interpreter, gave a brief presentation on the Carl T. Johnson Hunting and Fishing Center. **Tim Schreiner** noted that the state park and the interpretive center work closely and cooperatively with the Cadillac community.

Chairman **Richardson** and director **Creagh** thanked the group for the hospitality and tour of Tippy Dam the previous day. **Creagh** also thanked the staff for being a great community partner.

License Sales Marketing Update/Michigan Wildlife Council Update Marketing and Outreach division chief **Kristin Phillips**, updated the commission on the recent meeting of the Michigan Wildlife Council. The council reviewed criteria for the proposal related to the statewide effort to inform the general public about the critical role hunters and anglers play in conservation in Michigan. **Phillips** also reviewed a renewed effort this year to promote deer hunting in Michigan, recognizing this is the department's big and iconic hunting season.

White Nose Syndrome in Bats Forest Resources division chief **Bill O'Neill** and Wildlife Threatened and Endangered Species coordinator, **Dan Kennedy**, talked about the proposed federal listing of the northern long-eared bat. The bat is suffering significant population declines because of white-nose syndrome. The Northern Long-eared bat ranges across 38 states and five counties in Michigan have been confirmed with the fungus in Michigan. The listing of the bat as an endangered species could have a significant impact on forest management. Michigan has helped lead multi-state responses to this possibility and helped garner an extension on the federal decision while further investigation and discussion has taken place. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will make the final listing decision, which is due on April 2, 2015. The hope is that all 38 states will adopt the recommendation, which is to list the bat as threatened, rather than endangered. This would allow the Service to promulgate a rule to permit normal forest management even as steps are taken to protect the Northern Long-eared bat.

National Association of State Park Director's Award to Higgins Lake Foundation Parks and Recreation division chief **Ron Olson**, recognized an award from the National Association of

State Park Directors to the Higgins Lake Foundation for the foundation's work protecting Higgins Lake through a variety of efforts.

Trail Naming Contest **Olson** also talked about the naming contest for the Governor's showcase trail, which has seen more than 7,000 entries so far. The deadline is October 13, 2014.

Law Enforcement Division Lifesaving Award, Director **Creagh** and Law Enforcement division chief **Gary Hagler** presented a life-saving award to the officers who searched for and found a two-year old Newaygo County girl who was lost in the woods for 24 hours. The team found the child nearly two miles from her home. This award went to Sgt. **Mike Bomay**, Conservation Officers **Brian Lebel**, **Jeff Ginn** and **Michael Wells**. Director **Creagh** added that the department is very proud of these individuals.

Legislative Update, **Trevor VanDyke**, Legislative and Legal Affairs Office Director, provided a written report of legislation related to the DNR. In addition to the written report, **Dennis Knapp**, Chief of Staff provided updates on recent legislative highlights.

Hunter's Safety Instructor's Award **Joseph W. Primozich** received the Hunter Education Instructor Award for his 43 years of service in that program, **John Seelman** for 44 years, **David Hansen** for 44 years and **James Johnson** for 46 years.

John Madigan was presented with an award for his twelve years of service to the Natural Resources Commission. **Richardson** and **Creagh** thanked **Madigan** for his dedication to natural resources on behalf of the department and commission.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

(**Stacy Welling-Haughey** read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances which began at 4:10 p.m.)

Dan Kimmel, **Michigan B.A.S.S. Nation** appeared to speak about promoting bass fishing to every fisherman. While doing so he presented several bass fishing statistics and noted that fishing is a significant industry. He is in agreement with Option 4 as listed.

Jim Maturen, **Michigan Wild Turkey Hunter's Association** is concerned regarding the turkey population in Upper Peninsula (UP) and Northern Lower Peninsula. His group is not in favor of the fall season in the UP and in parts of the Lower Peninsula. He adds that the habitat is there, but the turkeys aren't. They are concerned about the future in the northern part of the state. **Maturen** talked about the impacts that last winter had the wild turkey population. He realizes that it is too late to make any changes to this fall wild turkey hunting season, but would like to see some changes for the 2016 fall turkey hunting season. He also spoke of changing the fall

turkey hunting date opener back to October 15. He questions the sound science practice when the date was moved up to September 15. **Matonich** adds that **Maturen** raises some good points for future consideration.

Kendra Sable, Private Landowner Elk Lottery Initiative. **Sable** was part of a group of private landowners interested in protecting their lands from the destruction caused by the elk population. She shared information from a January 2013 letter and also from a November 2013 letter. **Sable** is amazed at the amount of food an adult elk eats. She stated that it is very heartbreaking when efforts are made to improve their property then the elk come through and damage the property. She is very frustrated. Vegetation and forest have changed due to elk damage. **Sable** also talked about a June 19, 2014 letter which outlined that private landowners in her area would like to see a landowner elk lottery.

Amy Trotter, MUCC shared MUCC resolution #16 – the Michigan Bass Season Change. Proposed Michigan BASS Nation, Friday before Memorial day, and catch and immediate release year around. From their perspective we need to look at how we can simplify regulations across the board. MUCC is supporting the last Saturday in April. This would provide tremendous opportunities for the angling public.

Trotter also mentions that it is time to have conversation regarding #3 and #4 buckshot for coyote hunting again and move the issue forward.

Robert Cartlidge, The Bass Federation, Inc. shared some information on the Bass Federation and the groups under its umbrella. Michigan has shortest bass season other than Maine. They are trying to bring events into Lake St. Clair and Detroit areas. This would have a huge economic impact. The Bass Federation would like to support Option 4.

Dave Reault, The Bass Federation of Michigan supports Option 4, last Saturday in April and year around catch and immediate release. Their group has been working for 25 years to get expanded opportunities. He notes that the department doesn't have anything negative to say about the change of the seasons. Based on science, haven't seen any reason for alarm or concern. This should be a benefit to the state. Biggest stewards of bass fishery, wouldn't want to see anything that would harm the fishery. The Bass Federation of Michigan would like to see Option 4 adopted.

Ron Spitler, came to discuss the bass regulations as a former fisheries division employee. **Spitler** discussed how fishing clubs have helped him. He notes that he is in favor of Option 4.

Ron Karr, a former Montmorency County sheriff spoke regarding the private landowners elk initiative. He did speak about the economically positive items that elk bring to the area, noting the Elk Fest, however, they are not a benefit to farmers. They have done much damage to his property. He would like to see an elk lottery for landowners.

Dale Hendershot, came to discuss the use of buckshot at night for hunting predators. The biggest reason it came forward is youth and women using 20 gauge shotguns. This issue has been brought forward to the Law Enforcement Division (LED), and they do not want to budge. Buckshot is legal during the day. **Hendershot** discussed the biggest concern of LED being poaching. He is looking for some way to have committee meeting or work with commission to examine different portions of this to see where we can go with this and what we can do with it. **Matonich** adds that a meeting needs to be orchestrated with all information.

Gene Gilliland, B.A.S.S., LLC, Bass Regulations national conservation officer.

In the opinion of B.A.S.S., LLC, Option 4 which allows for the year-round catch and immediate release of bass and moves the opening date for bass harvest season to align with the respective openers for other species, offers the greatest additional opportunity. Science supports year around bass fishing. To be fair, the department should expand the bass season, with Option 4 with year-round catch and release, and do something to improve facilities, which may reduce user conflicts. This would be scientifically sound and economically advantageous.

Brent Marlatt, Private Landowners Elk Initiative

Thanked the other speakers who came to support this initiative. He feels like they are elk farmers, not by choice. Elk are not being contained. Talked about fencing and the problem that it is to landowners/farmers in this area. Losses are compounded over the years. Invites NRC to have him come to Lansing to show a PowerPoint presentation showing the images of the problem the elk cause. This has to stop, there has to be some change. **Marlatt** would like to be contacted to make the presentation.

Angie McCarthur, came to express her support by providing three reasons for the sale of Upper Peninsula property to Graymont.

Bruce Rendon, State Representative extends his thanks to the commission for coming to the area. He shared his experience about going on a CO ride-along on opening day of elk season, and exactly what they are required to do, including being a first responder. He also extends his thanks to the COs for doing what they do.

Chairman Richardson adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 5:20 p.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 5:20 p.m. He noted that all commissioners who were present at the Committee of the Whole were present for the regular meeting.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY – NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Salvage Regulations for Game Killed by Collision with a Motor Vehicle, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 16 of 2014.

Elk Management Unit Technical Change, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 17 of 2014.

Fisheries Division's Informational Recommendation for Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass Regulations.

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes, September 11, 2014

Commissioner **Nichols** made a motion that the minutes of the September 11, 2014, NRC meeting be approved. Commissioner **Klarr** supported the motion. **Richardson** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Rehabilitator Regulations and Veterinarians

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved that the Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 14 of 2014, Rehabilitator Regulations and Veterinarians be adopted. Commissioner **Matonich** supported the motion. **Richardson** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Trapping on Commercial Forest Lands

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved that the Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 15 of 2014, Trapping on Commercial Forest Lands be adopted. Commissioner **Nichols** supported the motion. **Richardson** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

DIRECTOR – FOR INFORMATION ONLY AND ACTION ITEMS

Director **Creagh** listed the “for information only” items listed on the agenda.

Prohibited and Restricted Aquatic Invasive Species, Invasive Species Order Amendment No. 1 of 2014.

Designated Trout Streams for Michigan, Fisheries Order No. 210.15.

Statewide Trout, Salmon, Whitefish, Lake Herring, and Smelt Regulations, Fisheries Order No. 200.15.

Director **Creagh** listed the "Director's Action" items listed on the agenda and indicated he would approve all items.

On the state forest management plan, reference page 9, will remain consistent for at least 5 years. He appreciates the leadership of **Richardson** and **O'Neill** working with Timber Advisory Council. All support the need for certified lumber. Will move this ahead, moving to resolve a corrective action request.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee

Commissioner **Klarr** provided a report on the day's earlier Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee meeting, which included a presentation on the Mitchell State Park and the Carl T. Johnson Center, an update on the new camping fee structure, an update on Island Lake Recreation Area and 2015 budget and initiatives.

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** provided the following information regarding the NRC Policy Committee and Wildlife and Fisheries: during the committee, chief **Dexter** updated the group on the B.A.S.S. Anger of the Year tournament in Escanaba. He also talked about the fall salmon and trout run, noting that numbers are down from previous years in Lakes Huron and Michigan. Nick Popoff spoke to the committee about aquatic invasive species. **Todd Grischke** gave an update on the proposed new catch and immediate release bass regulations.

Chief **Mason** talked about open seasons for waterfowl, archery deer, grouse, woodcock, small game and fall turkey. He also talked about the continuing success of Michigan Operation Freedom Outdoors, which serves disabled veterans. **Steve Shine** from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) spoke about partnerships between the department and MDARD.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner **Nichols** informed that the Marketing, Partnership, Youth Outreach and Outreach Advisory Committee will be meeting next month. He also shared that he attended the ribbon

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cutting at Maple River in September, noting that what has been done to improve the area is phenomenal

Commissioner **Matonich** attended a meeting at Constitution Hall where a dissertation presentation was given by a MSU PhD candidate on recovered wolf management in Michigan. He added that he was contacted by a person involved with the Elk Festival in Atlanta and that he designed and donated a clock for the charity auction.

Commissioner **Klarr** went grouse hunting recently, saw over 70 turkeys in a 24 hour period in Petoskey area. She also went fishing for kings the other day and very much enjoyed the tour of the Tippy Dam area.

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** attended an informal meeting with director **Creagh** and chief deputy **Moritz** and conservation leaders in Crawford County area. Commissioner **Klarr** and he are attending a Ruffed Grouse Society banquet tomorrow in Emmet County area.

Creagh thanked commissioner **Nichols** for attending the ribbon cutting event on Maple River. He also thanked all of the partners involved in that event and appreciated Governor Snyder being there. In addition, he thanked Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** for providing leadership for the conversation they had with the conservation leaders in Crawford County.

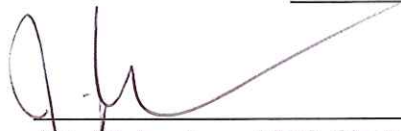
Next Meeting

Chairman **Richardson** announced that the next regular meeting of the NRC is scheduled for Thursday, November 6, 2014, at the MSU Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health, 4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing. Committees meeting in November will be the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries, and the NRC Marketing, Partnership, Youth Outreach and Outreach Advisory Committee.


Adjournment

Commissioner **Matonich** made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner **Nichols** seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

APPROVED: Date: 12/11/14



J.R. Richardson, NRC Chairman



Keith Creagh, DNR Director